

## Executive Summary of the Report on the Damage Situation Resulting from the Fire at Shuri-jō Site

January 2020  
Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan

### 1. Summary of the Property

- The remains of Shuri-jō are elements with Outstanding Universal Value of the property, and above-ground replicas are interpretation facilities that visually convey the Outstanding Universal Value.

### 2. Summary of the Fire at Shuri-jō Site

#### (1) Particulars from the start of the fire to its extinguishment

- The fire resulted in material damage, such as nine replica structures including the state hall being burnt down.
- It is probable that the fire was caused by the electrical system but this and other possibilities are being investigated.

#### (2) Damage situation

- With regard to the state hall, two spots of the remains that were exposed for exhibition and research purposes were damaged.
- While the deterioration of stone surfaces has been observed, a thorough investigation of the damage situation is underway.

### 3. Impacts on Outstanding Universal Value

- The area of the exposed remains of the state hall that were damaged by the fire is limited to about 0.05% of the component part. The remains other than the exposed spots are protected by a layer of earth and are not considered to have been damaged by the fire.
- The rebuilding of the completely and partially destroyed replica structures is possible since a related documentation of their previous building is available.
- Based on the above, the negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property is considered to be slight.

### 4. Basic Policies for Recovery

- The government will advance measures for rebuilding of the replica of the state hall as quickly as possible guided by the following basic principles.
  - This rebuilding of the replica of the Shuri-jō state hall will follow the concept of the previous building of the replica which was based on detailed historical research. In other words, the exact replica of the state hall (the state hall which was reconstructed in 1712 and designated a National Treasure in 1925) will be rebuilt.
  - In addition, new data obtained after the previous building of the replica and changes in the situation for availability of building materials will be reflected in the rebuilding planning, and also fire prevention measures will be enhanced in light of the current fire.
  - So that the rebuilding of the replica of the state hall follows the previous building plan for the replica as much as possible, the government will work in unison in procuring building materials such as lumber and lacquer. Regarding the manufacture and installation of Okinawa’s distinctive red roof tile, the government will support the use of traditional techniques that have been accumulated and transmitted in Okinawa since the previous building of the replica.
  - An advisory panel for technical examination was established in the Okinawa General Bureau of the Cabinet Office that includes experts from Okinawa who took part in the previous building of the replica, and examinations continue to be made in cooperation with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism and other related ministries and agencies. So as to fully reflect the views of the Okinawan people, Okinawa Prefecture will also participate in these examinations.
  - The government will continue to advance measures in close coordination with UNESCO.
- The government will aim to formulate a work schedule for the rebuilding of the replica of the state hall and other replica structures within the current fiscal year (by the end of March 2020).

## **Executive Summary of the Report on the Progress of Recovery after the Fire at the Shuri-jō Site**

May 2020

Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan

### **1. Overview**

The investigation into the cause of the fire began immediately after the fire broke out on October 31, 2019, and was completed in March 2020. It is considered that the likeliest cause of the fire was the electrical system inside the *Seiden* (state hall), however the damage was so extreme that the cause was not identified.

The entire Shuri-jō site was closed to the public immediately after the fire, but restrictions have been relaxed in accordance with safety being ensured, along with the progress of the investigation into the cause of the fire. Hereafter, the damaged remains will be opened to the public, and signboards explaining the state of the damage and the restoration process will be installed onsite. In addition, information concerning the progress of discussions on the recovery is available on government websites and through other media.

### **2. Progress on the Restoration of the Remains as Elements with Outstanding Universal Value**

Regarding the remains—elements with Outstanding Universal Value—, the two spots of the remains in the state hall, which were not covered with layers of earth and therefore exposed, were damaged along with the destruction of the replica structure by fire. Tarps were used to cover the damaged, exposed remains for temporary protection. Then, a detailed investigation of the damaged remains was conducted under the supervision of local government experts in charge of cultural properties and experts from the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and in February, sand capping was performed as a protective measure to ensure a more stable environment for the damaged remains. Starting in late March, measures were taken to preserve the damaged remains in one of the two spots. Specifically, the surfaces of the remains were reinforced, and a temporary shelter was constructed, with a plan to open the reinforced remains.

### **3. Progress on the Rebuilding of the Replicas as Interpretation Facilities**

Regarding the replica structures—facilities that visually interpret Outstanding Universal Value—, nine replica structures including the state hall were completely destroyed by the fire, and two other replica structures were partially damaged by the fire. Last December, the policies for rebuilding the replica of the state hall was developed. Since then, the removal of rubble from the damaged replica structures has continued with consideration toward the remains. Additionally, an advisory panel and working groups established to discuss the technical examination of the recovery of the Shuri-jō site held many discussions and reported the results in a consolidated form in mid-March. They made several specific proposals for fire prevention, including a consideration toward the installation of proper facilities for early detection, initial fire extinguishing, and firefighting. Based on this report, a work schedule for rebuilding the replica of the state hall was formulated at the end of March. In addition to having implemented volunteering activities in which the local community participates in the recovery work, a consideration toward implementing projects for developing traditional technical skills in the local area is planned in future.